



General Assembly

Sixtieth session

Official Records

Distr.: General
30 December 2005

Original: English

General Committee

Summary record of the 4th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 13 December 2005, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Eliasson (President of the General Assembly) (Sweden)

Contents

Agenda item 7: Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items (*continued*)

Request for the inclusion of an additional item entitled "Protracted conflicts in the Black Sea-South Caucasus region and their implications for international peace, security and development"

Request for the inclusion of an additional item entitled "Follow-up to the recommendations of the Independent Inquiry Committee into the United Nations Oil-for-Food Programme"

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda item 7: Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items *(continued)*

Request for the inclusion of an additional item entitled “Protracted conflicts in the Black Sea-South Caucasus region and their implications for international peace, security and development” (A/60/234)

1. **The Chairman** invited the Committee to consider a request by States members of the GUAM group (Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine) for the inclusion in the agenda of the sixtieth regular session of the General Assembly of an agenda item entitled “Protracted conflicts in the Black Sea-South Caucasus region and their implications for international peace, security and development”. The representative of the Republic of Moldova had asked to address the Committee in accordance with rule 43 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

2. *At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Grigore (Republic of Moldova) took a seat at the Committee table.*

3. **Mr. Grigore** (Republic of Moldova), speaking also on behalf of Azerbaijan, Georgia and Ukraine, said that, despite international mediation, the protracted conflicts in the Black Sea-South Caucasus region had continued, and territories beyond the control of the legitimate central authorities had emerged and become breeding grounds for terrorism, separatism, organized crime, trafficking and smuggling. Those conflicts’ far-reaching implications for international peace and security and regional stability and development had led the members of the GUAM group of States — Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine — to propose that they should be considered by the General Assembly at its sixtieth session. The reasons for that request, which complied fully with Article 11, paragraph 2, of the Charter of the United Nations, had been explained fully in the information meetings which the GUAM group had held, in a spirit of transparency, with the members of the General Committee and in the explanatory memorandum attached as an annex to the letter from its permanent representatives addressed to the President of the General Assembly (A/60/234). He was confident that the General Assembly would lend impetus to the

efforts to resolve the conflicts in the Black Sea-South Caucasus region peacefully and in compliance with international law, thus upholding the principles of dedication to the sovereign equality, territorial integrity and political independence of all States established in the Charter and major documents of the United Nations.

4. *Mr. Grigore (Republic of Moldova) withdrew.*

5. **Mr. Smirnov** (Russian Federation) said that his delegation considered inclusion of the proposed item in the agenda of the General Assembly politically inappropriate, because it would serve neither the aim of revitalizing its activities nor the ongoing efforts to address the conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, Transnistria and Nagorny Karabakh by peaceful means and through existing mechanisms which included peacebuilding and peacekeeping operations undertaken by the United Nations and other organizations. Those efforts had maintained relative stability in the regions in question, and it was inaccurate to say that a threat to international peace and security existed. It urged other members of the General Committee to join it in opposing the proposal.

6. **Mr. Martirosyan** (Armenia), recalling that, at the previous session of the General Assembly, a similar attempt had been made to add an item to the agenda under the pretext of urgency without adequate justification, said that the current attempt similarly carried insufficient proof. Proposing an issue which, contrary to the provisions of rule 15 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, was not of an important and urgent character, ran counter to the current efforts to revitalize the work of the General Assembly and constituted a dangerous precedent for violation of established and respected procedures. While the delegation of Armenia did not challenge the right of States to introduce issues into the agenda of the General Assembly pursuant to rule 15, the present case was not a justified use of that Rule.

7. Not only had there been no serious or significant events on the ground in the regions concerned, the proposed item clustered together four very different conflicts. In the specific case of Nagorny Karabakh, conflict resolution efforts had been far from fruitless. The Ministerial Council of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), at its meeting in Ljubljana on 5 and 6 December 2005, had taken the view that the parties to the Prague Process

were poised to make the transition from negotiation to decision, and that benefits for all were within reach.

8. Although the Member States proposing the additional item had invoked the references in the Charter of the United Nations to sovereignty and territorial integrity, they had neglected other considerations, including the inalienable right to self-determination, which must be considered in resolving conflicts. His delegation saw the proposal in question as an attempt by Azerbaijan to predetermine the outcome of the peace negotiations undertaken within the OSCE framework, including the status of Nagorny Karabakh. In the absence of convincing reasons for urgent consideration of the issue, the delegation of Armenia wished its inclusion in the General Assembly agenda to be put to the vote.

9. **Mr. Muhumuza** (Uganda) said that his delegation opposed the inclusion of the proposed item in the agenda of the General Assembly, believing that such a step would stand in the way of the conflict-resolution efforts conducted under the auspices of OSCE, which were moving in the right direction and should be given a chance to succeed.

10. **Mr. Aliyev** (Azerbaijan) said that the request of the States Members of the GUAM group had been motivated by the dangerous situation in the Black Sea-South Caucasus region, where protracted conflicts that had already been running for 15 to 17 years were affecting the lives of over 16 million people. The States members of the GUAM group, far from seeking to change the format of the ongoing peace negotiations, were seeking to enlist the support of the General Assembly for those efforts and to promote adherence to international law, the Charter of the United Nations, relevant Security Council resolutions and OSCE principles and decisions. The GUAM proposal was fully consistent with Article 15, paragraph 2, of the Charter of the United Nations and would strengthen peace and security in the Black Sea-South Caucasus region, creating an environment conducive to cooperation on security, development, trade, transport and cross-border issues.

11. While his delegation believed that the role of the General Assembly in the current matter was to decide on issues of procedure rather than substance, the comments of the representative of Armenia on issues of substance merited a response. It was unfortunate that 13 years of OSCE mediation had failed to resolve the

conflict over Nagorny Karabakh, continued occupation of which would stand in the way of peaceful coexistence between Armenia and Azerbaijan. The only basis for deciding the status of Nagorny Karabakh was preservation of the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. Once Armenian troops were withdrawn from the occupied territories, all transport routes, including the Lachin corridor, could be used by all parties. It was vital to develop trust and confidence between Armenia and Azerbaijan, an aim which would be promoted by the addition of the matter to the agenda of the General Assembly.

12. **The Chairman** said that the representative of Ukraine had asked to address the Committee in accordance with rule 43 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

13. *At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Kryzkanivsky (Ukraine) took a seat at the Committee table.*

14. **Mr. Kryzkanivsky** (Ukraine) said that the States members of the GUAM group had requested inclusion of an additional item in the agenda of the General Assembly for obvious reasons. First, in accordance with its Charter, the Organization must play an active role in maintaining States' territorial integrity and political independence. The territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova was under threat. Second, the Organization's lack of attention to the instability in the Black Sea-South Caucasus region gave others the wrong signal about its willingness to ensure security and stability everywhere. Third, inclusion of the additional item in question in the agenda of the General Assembly neither duplicated existing conflict-resolution efforts nor changed the rules or remit of those efforts. It was natural for States to turn to an international forum for assistance. The GUAM group was simply seeking the understanding and involvement of the General Assembly, and had never challenged the right of any State to do so.

15. *Mr. Kryzkanivsky (Ukraine) withdrew.*

16. **The Chairman** said that the representative of Georgia had asked to address the Committee in accordance with rule 43 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

17. *At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Chitaia (Georgia) took a seat at the Committee table.*

18. **Mr. Chitaia** (Georgia) said that his delegation had joined the other members of the GUAM group in seeking to focus more international attention on the conflicts in the Black Sea-South Caucasus region. The counter-arguments it had heard were not persuasive. For example, the Security Council had been dealing with the conflict in Abkhazia for fourteen years without finding a solution to that very complex situation. The General Assembly must thoroughly explore the central problem: the threat to peace and to Member States' sovereignty and territorial integrity presented by separatism. His delegation urged the members of the General Committee not to deny the members of the GUAM group the right to request discussion of issues which affected them, especially as they had not been prescriptive about what form the peace process was to take.

19. *Mr. Chitaia (Georgia) withdrew.*

20. **The Chairman** said that the representative of Armenia had requested a vote on the question of the inclusion in the agenda of the current session of the General Assembly, under heading A (Maintenance of international peace and security) of an additional item entitled "Protracted conflicts in the Black Sea-South Caucasus region and their implications for international peace, security and development".

21. *The proposal was rejected by 5 votes to 3, with 17 abstentions.*

22. **Ms. Collet** (France) said that, while her delegation understood that the ongoing conflicts in the Black Sea-South Caucasus region caused concern and must be resolved to bring stability, it had abstained in the vote, being unconvinced that existing conflict-resolution efforts, including those undertaken by the OSCE Minsk Group and the Security Council, would benefit from the General Assembly also taking up the matter.

23. **Mr. O'Neill** (United Kingdom) said that his delegation had voted in favour of the inclusion of an additional item on the issue in question in order to support the principle that any Member State had the right to propose that a matter be brought before the General Assembly. Its decision to support that principle was distinct from the question of whether or not it would have supported a specific draft text on the conflicts in question, even though it wished to emphasize its concern at the lack of progress in

resolving them and its advocacy of the efforts of the OSCE and others to make progress towards that end.

24. **Mr. Yáñez-Barnuevo** (Spain), emphasizing that his delegation understood the reasoning of the members of the GUAM group, said that it had nevertheless abstained in the vote because it was concerned that adding to the General Assembly agenda matters already under consideration in other forums would prove counterproductive.

25. **Mr. Diarra** (Mali) said that his delegation wished to reaffirm its respect for the territorial integrity and political independence of all States. It had abstained in the vote on the addition of an item on conflicts in the Black Sea-South Caucasus region to the agenda of the General Assembly, taking the view that all conflict-resolution mechanisms, including those already operating, must be given support.

26. **Mr. Wasilewski** (United States of America) said that the vote was purely procedural and that it carried no implications for his Government's substantive attitude vis-à-vis an eventual resolution in the plenary. His Government was aware of the argument that the initiative might negatively affect existing negotiations in the so-called "frozen conflicts" of the Black Sea region. It had paid proper attention to that risk but did not deem it to be so grave as to justify depriving the four nations involved of their right to bring the issue before the General Assembly. He emphasized that his Government's policy in discussing or voting on the theme in the Plenary would be guided exclusively by what would help, not harm, a peaceful resolution of the long-running conflicts in question.

Request for the inclusion of an additional item entitled "Follow-up to the recommendations of the Independent Inquiry Committee into the United Nations Oil-for-Food Programme"

27. **The Chairman** said that the inclusion of an additional item entitled "Follow-up to the recommendations of the Independent Inquiry Committee into the United Nations Oil-for-Food Programme" had been requested by Costa Rica (A/60/235). The representative of Costa Rica had asked to participate in the discussion of the item in accordance with rule 43 of the rules of procedure.

28. *At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Stagno Ugarte (Costa Rica) took a place at the Committee table.*

29. **Mr. Stagno Ugarte** (Costa Rica) said that the request for inclusion was based on a detailed follow-up of the work of the Independent Inquiry Committee (IIC). His delegation had initially raised the issue of the mismanagement of the oil-for-food programme during informal consultations on the IIC report in the General Assembly. Two weeks after the submission of the Committee's interim report, his delegation had reiterated its position during the informal consultations held prior to the publication of the report of the Secretary-General entitled "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all" (A/59/2005). One week following the submission of the second interim report, it had again addressed the matter in the General Assembly under agenda items 45 and 55. Five weeks following the submission of the third interim report and one week after the publication of the report entitled "The Management of the United Nations Oil-for-Food Programme", the Vice-President of Costa Rica had again raised the issue at the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly. Although the latter report had been repeatedly quoted during the negotiations of the 2005 World Summit Outcome, its recommendations had not been reflected in the document.

30. He drew attention to the reasons for the request for the inclusion of the item, as contained in the explanatory memorandum (A/60/235 and annex), and highlighted the recommendations which fell within the framework of the competence of the General Assembly. The recommendations to strengthen the independence of oversight and auditing; to reform and improve management performance; and to expand conflict-of-interest and financial disclosure requirements had been included in the 2005 World Summit Outcome and were currently being considered by the General Assembly. However, his delegation felt that the Member States should be familiar with all the recommendations in order to be able to make balanced decisions with regard to administrative management in the context of discussions on United Nations reform. It did not seek to introduce a draft resolution on the inclusion of the item or to determine when the item should be considered by the General Assembly; however, it seemed logical that the item should be discussed at the same time as the package of United Nations reforms.

31. *Mr. Stagno Ugarte (Costa Rica) withdrew.*

32. **Mr. Iosifov** (Russian Federation) wondered whether it was feasible to include additional agenda items at a time when the Organization was making intensive efforts to streamline the work of the General Assembly, but was sympathetic to the reasons for the proposal. He suggested that the title should be altered to reflect the subject more accurately and proposed that "on administrative management and oversight" should be added after "recommendations". In fact, those terms had been used in paragraph 2 of the explanatory memorandum (A/60/235).

33. **Mr. Gopinathan** (India) said that his delegation agreed with the proposal by the representative of Costa Rica and that it accepted the amendment proposed by the representative of the Russian Federation. However, he noted that the exact term used in paragraph 2 of the explanatory memorandum was in fact "internal oversight".

34. **Mr. Iosifov** (Russian Federation) responded that the Russian version did not contain the word "internal" but that his delegation would accept the English version, namely "internal oversight".

35. *The Committee decided to recommend that the General Assembly should include the additional item entitled "Follow-up to the recommendations on administrative management and internal oversight of the Independent Inquiry Committee into the United Nations Oil-for-Food Programme" in the agenda of the sixtieth session under heading I (Organizational, administrative and other matters) and that it should be allocated to the Plenary.*

36. **Mr. Yáñez-Barnuevo** (Spain) said that it was incomprehensible that the IIC reports and recommendations had not been placed on the agenda of the General Assembly. His delegation was also concerned that the five reports were available in English only. It was aware that the documentation was voluminous but felt that, at a minimum, the reports themselves should be translated into all the official languages, so that the authorities in the respective capitals could familiarize themselves with their content. It was essential that the translations should be completed before the item was taken up in the General Assembly.

37. **Mr. Duarte** (Brazil) said that its concurrence with the Committee's decision to include the item in the agenda of the General Assembly did not prejudice

the substantive positions it might take when the item was actually discussed.

38. **Mr. Chen** (Under-Secretary-General, Department of General Assembly and Conference Management) said that, should the General Assembly request the translation of the IIC report into the six official languages of the United Nations, the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts had provided the following cost estimates: (1) the official translation and reproduction of the entire IIC report of 7 September 2005 (five volumes), including the report of the Working Group, in the six official languages would amount to \$2,717,300; (2) the official translation and reproduction of the IIC report of 7 September 2005, minus the report of the Working Group, in the six official languages would amount to \$2,250,800; (3) the official translation and reproduction of Volume I of the IIC report of 7 September 2005 in the six official languages would amount to \$258,800; (4) the reproduction of the entire IIC report of 7 September 2005 in English only would amount to \$82,000; (5) the reproduction of Volume I of the IIC report of 7 September 2005 in English only would amount to \$8,400.

39. **Mr. Yáñez-Barnuevo** (Spain) replied that it would also be useful to know the translation and reproduction costs of each individual report and reiterated that, under the General Assembly's own rules, the documentation must be available in all the official languages.

The meeting rose at 4.25 p.m.